

[Louis Bousman]

Dulaney, Ethel C., Wichita Falls, Texas Life History

REMINISCENSES OF LOUIS BOUSMAN

The following was taken from a copy of an interview given by Mr. Bousman, while he was a guest [of?] of the State Theatre in Wichita Falls, September 7, 1934, during the showing of the film, Billy, the Kid. According to Mr. Bousman, he was with Pat Garrett when Billy the Kid was captured [?] a few weeks before he was killed by Pat Garrett. During the showing of the film in Wichita Falls, there was on display in the lobby of the theatre a Winchester belonging to B.P. Schwend of [Henrietta?], Texas. Mr. Bousman says he remembers the gun very well, and is "quite sure that it belonged to Billy the Kid at the time of his capture". Mr. Schwend has a well known collection of old guns. (The original manuscript is on file with the HISTORICAL SURVEY files in the Kemp Public Library, Wichita Falls, Texas.)

"I was born in the state of Virginia, seventy-six years ago. I lived there until I was a good-sized boy and then moved to Grayson county, Texas when I was about fourteen years old. Later I went to Cherokee [ation?], close to Ft. Gibson, and stayed a number of years. When I was about twenty years old I moved to a place called Tascosa, in the Panhandle of Texas.

"At Tascosa I worked for a cattleman named Lit Littlefield. The town was a wild and wooly place and every body carried guns. [?] I built a picket corral out of cedar north of where the town of Amarillo now stands. Tascosa was forty-five miles northwest of Amarillo. The old court / house belongs to Mr. Bivins, a cowman who now lives in Amarillo. It is used as a ranch house. He owns the Lit Ranch, which is about ten miles square.

"The cattlemen around Tascosa complained that the cowboys were stealing their cattle, and also the boys were striking for higher wages. The cowmen got Pat Garrett to go down

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to Austin and get authority to put in a bunch of rangers, and they put in four under Pat Garrett. But Pat didn't stay with them; he was C.-12. Tex. 2 the sheriff in Linclon county, New Mexico. Me and another deputy sheriff told the cowmen that if they would go and swear out a warrant for these boys we would go out and arrest them. They did not do this. They were afraid of them. They thought if they could get rid of them they would be all right. They wanted to make an agreement with us to stay in bed on a certain night while they hung the strikers. We told them that if they came in to kill the boys the fight would be open, for we would protect the boys.

"The 'Home Rangers'——never arrested a man. They wanted to run over everybody around town, so one night we got in a fight—and killed three of them——Ed King—Fred Shelton, and I forgot the name of the othe other and I got away—one of our men got wounded —Len Woodruff, me and a fellow they called 'Cat Fish' never got a scratch. They buried the dead man out in what is called 'Boot Hill Cemetery'. They said I killed some of them. They shot Jessie Sheets and they thought that they were getting me. I heard a man say ' [?] I got Bousman'. They first started the row; they commenced the shooting and we shot back and blew some of their heads off. Pat Garrett was not there when the shooting took place. But they never put any more Rangers there after that.

'BILLY THE KID'

"Billy was fourteen years old when he killed his first man in Silver City, New Mexico. He was a porter and general boot black around the hotel. He came from New York, or somewhere in the East. There was a fellow there in the hotel who kept deviling Billy, and Billy told him that if he did not let him 3 alone he would kill him. The next morning the fellow commenced deviling him again, and grabbed a hold of him, so Billy killed him. Then he went out and stole [?] him a horse and left, and went down on the Pecos river where Chisholm's outfit was, and joined them. He hired to Chisholm as a cowboy.

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"The Lincoln County War was going on. It was a cowman's war. They were fighting over the grazing land for the cattle. Chisholm wanted it all. The war lasted about a year. After the war Billy the Kid did not surrender. The government of New Mexico pardoned all these men, but Billy did not surrender to them.

"Billy came to Tascosa—stayed at my camp a month. He stayed all around there among the cowmen until spring and then went back to New Mexico.—stealing cattle; would come over south of Tascosa and get them and drive them away—Cowmen—got Pat Garrett to come over there and talk to him— He told them if they would send him a bunch of men over there that he would capture Billy. I was one of the men sent over there and the others were Jim East, Tom Emory, Lon Chambers, and Charles Siringo.—So we met up with Pat Garrett at Anton Chico, in New Mexico. Then he picked out—me and Jim East, Lon Chambers, and Tom Emory.—rode all night—When we got to Fort Sumner—we sent a spy to see if Billy and his bunch were there . in that town He said, 'When I left there Billy and his men were there in the town.' So we rode into Fort Sumner before day, and went to Pete Maxwell's barn, and thought we would find Billy's horses—but they were not there,—so —we went over town and saw that he was gone.— Then Billy found out that we were there—Billy said, 'I will just go down and run them out of town and dismount them [!?] So he sent two men and Tom O'Phalliard. He rode up to the hospital and Pat was standing there in the shade of the porch, and Pat shot him. His horse went off with him and then he came back and we went out and got him and carried him inside. Billy the Kid and three other men were watching from a distance and we opened fire on them, so they left.—We buried Tom O'Phalliard the next day. Billy sent a spy in there to see who all we were—The spy told us that if we would start out they would meet us half way.—We started out there that night, and the spy met us and said they were gone —We took the trail of the horses and trailed them to the rock house and saw the horses tied on the outside. So me and Pat Garrett and Lon Chamber and a Mexican went over there and lay down down in a hollow by the door so we could look in—We lay there all night in the snow on our blankets.—Pat told us, 'If Billy goes out to feed the horses he will

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have a Mexican hat. You boys cut down and kill him.' Then Bowdre came out to feed the horses, so we all took a shot at him. He fell with his head back in the house. We thought it was Billy the Kid. Afterwards Billy hollered and said Bowdre wanted to come out there to us. Pat told him to come ahead and leave his guns in the house. But he came out with his gun right in front of him with his hands up. And when he got out there I [?] raised up and got him and laid him down on my blanket. He was shot in three places and was bleeding. He did not live but a few minutes. 5 "Billy and his outfit began trying to dig port holes in that rock house. There was only one north window and one west door. Pat says, 'There is no use for us to lay here all day. We better get away from here before they do get port holes.' Then we went down in the hollow a little ways and singled across to where our horses were and the rest of the men. Then we went back to the ranch house and got us some breakfast. Billy and his bunch tried to lead their horses into the house. They were tied to a post and they could reach out and get them. I shot the first one right in the neck, and he fell with his shoulders right in the door. The next one Pat shot the rope in two and he ran off and some of our bunch caught him. We got the ranchman to bring us down some food and some horse feed, and we stayed all day and finally Billy turned his horses out of the house in the middle of the evening and we got them. Between sundown and dusk Billy surrendered. He said he smelt that bacon frying and he was right hungry. We took them back to the ranch house and guarded them all night, and the dead man, too. Then we pulled out to Fort Sumner with them the next morning. When we were getting right at Fort Sumner Bowdre's wife came out to meet us in the snow. We whipped up the horses when we passed her and ran right up to the door, and I and Jim East grabbed the body and took it in and put it on the table. We didn't stop when we met her because we [?] did not want to hear her abuse[.?] She cussed Pat Garrett out. He told her to go over and pick out a suit of clothes to bury her husband in and he would pay for it. He also had the grave dug. 6 "We kept Billy the Kid and the three others in his bunch, put them in a house—under guard until next morning and Pat pulled out with them to Las Vegas, New Mexico. We got in there at night and the people found out that he had Billy the Kid in jail and a mob tried to take him away from Pat, and he told them if they did not stand back

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he would arm Bill and his bunch and they would fight it out. Pat and four other men took the prisoners to Silver City, New Mexico, and put them in jail there. They took him back to Lincoln afterwards where he was tried and got death sentence. After he got his sentence they placed two guards over him. One morning one guard had gone to breakfast, the other was readin reading the newspaper, and Bill was standing behind him, and he hit him over the head with his handcuffs. The guard started to run down the stairs, and Billy grabbd grabbed his gun from his scabbard and killed him. He then went back i in the room and got a shot gun loaded with twenty-two buck shot and went down stairs and raised the window and saw the other guard coming, and when he got right up close to him Billy hollered, 'Look out, I am going to put some buck shot into you.' And he killed him dead. Then Billy went back upstairs and armed himself with a Winchester and six-shooters, ordered a Mexican to steal a horse for him that was right in behind the house where he was being guarded. He told him to bring the horse to the blacksmith shop. He had the blacksmith to cut his shackles in two. When Billy mounted the horse the horse threw him. He ordered the Mexican to catch him, which he did, and Billy rode off. He went back to Fort Sumner and a 7 month ot or two after that Pat Garrett killed him there at Pete Maxwell's house. Pat slipped into Maxwell's room and found out Billy was there, Billy overheard somebody talking and he went to Maxwell's room and he says, 'Maxwell, what is that lying out there under those bushes?' Maxwell didn't answer, and then Pat shot him. That was John Poe, the deputy, lying out under the bushes. Billy was stuck on Maxwell's sister, the reason he went to their house, but Maxwell wanted to get rid of him."